

# Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS  
BI-MONTHLY

\$2.50 FOR TWO YEARS

VOLUME 30

MARCH - APRIL 1959

NUMBER 2

## RACE RELATIONS — DENOMINATIONAL STATEMENTS

### PART II

The January, February issue of **INTERRACIAL NEWS SERVICE** contained excerpted statements on race relations issued by denominations since 1955. It was impossible to include all of these statements in the January, February issue, therefore, the editors are devoting this issue to statements which they were unable to publish in the prior issue. As was the case in the January, February issue, because of space, it has been necessary to excerpt the pertinent sections of the statements for inclusion.

#### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

General Council, June 24-30, 1958

... With renewed dedication, we press towards more rapid achievement of full equality of rights and of recognition of the worth of persons regardless of racial ancestry, religion or national origin. This constraint is particularly pressing upon our consciences in respect to discrimination and segregation within the churches and church-sponsored agencies, institutions, and organizations. . . .

We call upon the members of our churches to work for adequate housing and community facilities that shall be available to all persons without regard to race or religion and to refrain from lending their resources to or participating in extending or creating ghettos.

We strongly recommend to our churches that they work with other Christian organizations and civic agencies to prepare communities for new residents of different ethnic background and to insure peaceful neighborly relations when such residents move in. To this end we commend securing and publishing of the names of signers to covenants of open occupancy such as: "We welcome into our neighborhoods any residents of good character, regardless of race, color, religion or national origin."

We further affirm the importance of increasing the supply of new or rehabilitated housing, especially for middle and low income groups, open to all without discrimination. The churches should encourage the use of personnel skilled in intergroup relations especially during transitional periods.

We urge all those engaged in financing, buying, selling, renting and leasing residences or apartments to make their resources and services available to all persons without consideration of race or creed. We also urge those engaged in city and community planning to lend their support and skills to create and maintain racially inclusive neighborhoods.

We respectfully call upon the President of the United States and the Executive Department to give firmer leadership in meeting problems arising from the changing relationships between the races and to use the Chief Executive's constitutional powers to uphold court decisions affecting civil rights. . . .

We call upon social action committees, local congregations, associations, conventions, conferences, boards and agencies and our affiliated institutions to strengthen the race relations program of our fellowship and to work with other religious bodies to meet the new demand of this

period of crisis. In this way, the United Church of Christ will make a more effective witness to Jesus Christ at home and abroad.

#### EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH

General Synod 1956

The General Synod remembers in love and understanding the fellow Christians of both races in those areas of our country where tensions are most severe, and is not unmindful that reconciliation as well as reformation is a part of our Christian witness. Yet General Synod cannot but support the principle of integration and urges full support of the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States outlawing segregation in the public schools. General Synod urges pastors and members of our congregations to lend their moral support to integration and to explore and support constructive programs toward integration in their communities. Further, General Synod deplors attempts to evade the decision of the Supreme Court by means which weaken and undermine the public school.

General Synod, 1956

... As members of a Christian denomination and of congregations of Christian people, we cannot be fully effective witnesses to the truth that Christ has broken down the partitions between men until our fellowship of worship and service is open to all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We cannot convincingly urge inclusiveness on others unless we, as Christian congregations are willing to take steps towards integration in our own fellowship of worship and service. And we cannot do otherwise than work persistently to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to guarantee equal opportunity for education, employment, and the enjoyment of civil rights to all citizens, regardless of their racial, national or religious origin. Discrimination and segregation have proved to be a denial of the justice God demands we owe to our neighbors. . . .

Steady progress towards inclusiveness in our congregations is an imperative; but the fact that we have not yet fully reached this goal in our churches does not excuse us from according to people of any race or of any national origin or of any religion the human rights we claim for ourselves in our common life.

No section or region of the nation can assume that it is free from all kinds of discrimination on account of color or religion or national origin. None of us and no group is justified in adopting an attitude of complacent superiority towards others. Each person and each section should measure its achievements not against the relative attainments or failures of another person or another section of the nation but rather against the standard of God's will.

On the other hand, the evidence of good faith is steady and persistent effort to remove the evils of discriminations which deny to others the rights we claim for ourselves. Without that evidence, protestations of good will and of concern for minority groups or for groups subjected to discrimination on the part of those who benefit from discrimination are hollow and insincere.



We must say plainly that to attempt to evade integration in the public schools by actions which would weaken or undermine the public schools is wrong. No doubt, integration in public schools will proceed at different rates. There are situations in which wisdom and discretion are needed as well as situations in which the complacent need to be stirred to effective and constructive action. The decision of the Supreme Court outlawing racial segregation in the schools provides the occasion for the members of Christian congregations to bear witness to the truth in love and to the love of truth; to support with their sympathy and prayers those who are devoted to constructive efforts toward a greater degree of justice; and to encourage consultation between white and colored persons in the local community.

## UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

### UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

General Assembly, 1956

We believe the United Presbyterian Church has always believed in the integration of the races. Therefore, in these days when this issue is astride the conscience of the nation we love, we reaffirm our first principles:

1. That God hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell upon the face of the earth.

2. That He is no respecter of persons.

3. That men are created equal and meant to live together in a love that means equality of opportunity and privilege.

In the light of these principles we thank God that the laws of the land have made segregation illegal in education.

Furthermore, believing that segregation is a violation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ we hereby recommend that the Ninety-Eighth Assembly adopt the following resolutions:

1. That local congregations minister to their own immediate communities, regardless of race, color, national, economic or cultural background, win each person to the Lord Jesus Christ and offer full membership and fellowship to all.

2. That all Church-controlled and Church-related institutions extend their ministries to all qualified persons without prejudice to race or cultural background.

3. That boards and agencies of the Church make appointments to staff positions and other employment opportunities in conformity to this principle of integration.

4. The boundaries of presbyteries accord fully with the principle of integration.

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S. A.

General Assembly, 1955

As Christians we hold that all forms of racial discrimination and segregation are denials of human worth and are contrary to the will of God.

We call for the launching of "operation desegregation" in our churches and church-related institutions and in the communities in which our churches work and serve:

1. The action of the Supreme Court of the United States with reference to racial segregation in public schools points up the failure of the church to achieve true fellowship within its own life. The church must act now to abolish from its practices all forms of segregation. We note progress already achieved on this front, but we must continue to work earnestly for desegregation. . . .

In the light of the action of the 167th General Assembly in adopting the recommendation of the General Council implementing the concept of an "inclusive membership" in our church we suggest careful study of this action and urge complete cooperation by each presbytery and session. We direct the Department of Social Education and Action to record and to report to the 169th General Assembly the progress of the church in "operation desegregation."

General Assembly, 1956

#### "No Problem"?

Realizing (1) that nowhere in our land can Negroes, and to a lesser extent other minority persons, escape the indignity of segregation or discrimination in one form or another, and (2) that the community or church that feels

it has no problem because there is no present crisis may have an especially difficult problem;

Recognizing that though an increasing number of churches are actually seeking to bring all persons in their neighborhoods into membership without distinction as to race or social status, nevertheless, many churches while morally supporting integration, are failing to implement their stand in terms of positive evangelistic effort, and some churches appear actually to be opposing integration,

The 168th General Assembly

Enjoins ministers and members of our churches

1. To stop talking about having "no problem" in situations where tension does not exist and the problem is therefore concealed,

2. To stop being content with a mere confession of guilt apart from deeds of repentance,

3. To stop pointing the finger of accusation at areas of high tension or conflict.

4. To begin serious, prayerful study where there is no present tension,

5. To bring about in small groups encounters and frank conversations with minority persons of comparable education and experience, and specialists in the field of human relations,

6. To welcome people of all races in the life and work of their churches,

7. To evangelize in the homes of nearby residents without regard to race with the purpose of bringing them into the fellowship of the church.

#### Residential Segregation

Emphasizing that it is the policy and purpose of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. to work for a non-segregated society as well as a non-segregated church;

Noting (1) that in many sections of our country real progress has been made in eliminating segregation in such fields as employment, transportation, hotel and restaurant accommodations, education, and other public services; (2) that in these same sections residential segregation usually continues to be a major problem; (3) that where residential desegregation has occurred it has nearly always been in older housing areas that tend to change from segregated white to segregated non-white because of the flight of white residents; and (5) that in most communities practically no new homes have been made available to non-white families,

The 168th General Assembly

Calls upon Christians who are contemplating the sale of property to see as of first importance the need of minority families for equal housing opportunities and adequate housing, and to make their houses available to all qualified purchasers without regard to race;

Directs the attention of homeowners to several studies, available from the Department of Social Education and Action, of the effect of non-white purchases on adjacent property values, demonstrating that values do not necessarily decline, and in fact often rise, after such purchases;

Urges sessions to bring Christians together in covenants of open occupancy which will stem the tendency toward "panic selling," and stabilize their neighborhoods on a non-segregated basis.

#### Victims of Reprisals

Noting with respect to the Supreme Court decision affecting racial segregation in public schools: . . .

That men supporting desegregation have lost jobs, had their mortgages foreclosed, insurance policies cancelled, credit cut off, and wholesale deliveries of goods stopped;

That some individuals, both laymen and ministers, of many denominations have taken courageous positions in their churches and communities and have been severely ostracized by friends and even family;

That several ministers of the Gospel are known to have been forced out of their pulpits because of statements they had made or positions they had taken relative to this issue;

That a significant number of Presbyterian, U. S. A. members have been subjected to indignities, intimidations, beatings, cross-burnings, and harassing litigations,

The 168th General Assembly



Assures members of our Presbyteries and churches who may be under persecution of the corporate support of our church and directs the Stated Clerk to give them encouragement, counsel, and other assistance as he may judge to be appropriate;

Urges Christians individually and corporately to help bear the burdens of their fellowmen under persecution, by sending gifts of money to Church World Service for the relief of persons designated as "political refugees in our own country."

#### ***Job Discrimination***

Noting that discrimination in employment consigns Negroes and other minority persons to the least desirable jobs without consideration of their personal qualifications or training, thereby depriving them of dignity and vocational opportunity,

The 168th General Assembly

Urges Presbyterian employers to take such steps as may be necessary to break the pattern of discrimination in employment;

Urges Christians to give individual and corporate support to employers who have courageously employed Negroes on a non-discriminatory basis, prevailing patterns and attitudes of their community to the contrary;

And urges Christians to give support in the most appropriate ways for a federal Fair Employment Practices Law.

#### ***Corporate Action***

Noting that every major denomination has voiced support of the Supreme Court's decisions, but that pressures on individuals and churches at the local level to conform to the prevailing mood have been extreme in many localities;

Being aware that some Christians, both laymen and ministers, have supported the programs of White Citizens Councils and like groups, and a few have assumed positions of leadership in them, and that many Christians are urging ministers not to take positions against segregation;

Acknowledging the impossibility of apportioning degrees of guilt or innocence for a sin that afflicts the whole body of the Church, and that it is the Church's mission to be a prophetic voice of God's Judgment and an instrument of his reconciling grace;

Remembering that the Scripture enjoins us all to "teach and admonish one another" (Col. 3:16), and to "stir up one another to love and good works" (Heb. 10:24), and believing Christians acting corporately and together are stronger in the Spirit than when left to act only as individuals,

The 168th General Assembly

Enjoins presbyteries and, especially, church sessions to consider prayerfully, in the light of the testimony of Scripture for love and justice, the common voice of the Church Universal against racial segregation, and the developments cited above, the corporate response God asks of them in the specific situations in which they find themselves; and

Urges sessions of churches located in communities of racial tension to find ways of bringing Christians and other citizens together in small groups across racial lines to discuss their common problems and goals relative to desegregation.

General Assembly, May 21, 1957

... The 169th General Assembly

Directs the Department of Social Education and Action to undertake suitable studies and surveys to discover the extent to which racial integration has been achieved in the church and in its agencies and institutions, to develop a comprehensive, effective, unified program for the whole church to achieve a non-segregated church and a non-segregated society, and to report to the next General Assembly;

Calls on ministers and sessions of churches, on presbyteries and synods, on the boards and agencies of the church, on Presbyterian-related institutions, to cooperate in this effort to implement the General Assembly deliverances of 1954, 1955, and 1956, which deal with race relations.

Commends the Stated Clerk for his forthright compliance with the directive of the 1956 General Assembly concerning "victims of reprisals" as he may judge to be appropriate,

Makes bold to call the members and ministers of the churches to the vocation of suffering for the sake of truth and justice, for "we should not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon us"\* when we seek to obey the call of Christ, and to encourage and support one another in bearing witness to the gospel according to which God makes no distinctions as to race or origin.

\* I Peter 4:12

### **SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

Christian Life Commission

1956

It is nothing new to say that we live in a world in conflict. Some call it simply a world in change. Others describe it as a world disintegrated. But regardless of what may be our viewpoint, we are in the midst of a great awakening among the peoples. For the first time in human history this awakening is worldwide in its scope. It seems that God is preparing the ground for his ultimate worldwide triumph. This final triumph is in keeping with his plan of the ages. In the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God has made clear what that plan is and what our part in it is to be. He does not promise us there will be no conflicts, but he does promise us the power to overcome them and a peace that will sustain us in the struggle.

The reason for these surging movements throughout the world is unique and challenging. For many centuries of human history the struggle was for material possessions — nations fought for wealth and a place in the sun. While that struggle still continues in some parts of the world, the major conflicts of our century are caused by long submerged peoples fighting for their recognition as persons and their inherent freedoms. . . .

#### ***The Courage of Prudence***

In view of our responsibility as a major group of world Christians we must be mature enough in our faith and strong enough in our fellowship to face with forthright sincerity the issues among us that vitally affect our gospel witness at home and around the world. . . .

With such courage and conviction we must face the present controversy in our relations with the Negro people. On this issue we are divided in opinion but let us not be divided in fellowship. No one person or group has the wisdom to lead us to a solution of the difficult situation that has developed. Only God in his infinite love and patience can do that. The times call for prayer and deep humility. They call us to repentance toward God and to confessions for hate and hasty words toward our fellow man.

The times call on us none the less to meet this issue as Christians should. We must meet it with facts and scriptural truth. We must recognize the fact that the problem of race relations in America is rooted deeply in our history and is the product of a series of tragic social experiences that have left their marks on both our groups.

These deep rooted social attitudes do not easily die. In some areas there can be no quick solution. And those who hope to achieve a peaceful adjustment must gird themselves with patience. The white man should seek to subdue the pride of his old mastery, the Negro the pride of his new achievement.

The Christian cannot stop at the point of law. He is motivated by love and grace. In spite of all the hate that has been shown and the hasty words that have been spoken Christian people must move into this controversy to accomplish friendly and mutually helpful adjustments.

Christian Life Commission

May, 1957

Some of our people feel that we should avoid any discussion of [the race] issue because of its controversial nature. This is a strange note to inject into the affairs of Baptists. Religious controversy led to the stoning of the prophets, the crucifixion of Christ, the beheading of Paul, and the death of unnumbered martyrs through the ages. The churches of Christ have made progress and have changed the course of history by the introduction of discordant ideas. A conformist church never changes anything.



In this our day of world mission advance, we cannot avoid this issue. The problem is rooted deeply in our history and is the product of a series of tragic social experiences that have left their marks on both the Negro and white citizens of our country. The people of both groups must gird themselves with patience, the white man fighting the pride of his old mastery and the Negro the pride of his new achievements.

#### Individuals as Persons

We must remember that in this controversy we are dealing with individuals as persons. We cannot depend upon automatic social processes to produce harmony as if all the people of any one race are alike in quality of character or capacity. Nor can we depend on laws that fix the status and define the rights of individuals in one race in relation to those in another. Legal and social patterns that doom all Negroes to a service "place" in American society regardless of their cultural progress can only make for increasing conflict. Laws are futile solutions. They cannot make peace. The Christian cannot stop at the point of law. He is motivated by love and grace.

We must realize that the racial issue is basically a moral and religious question. We do not mean by this that the churches should seek to implement court decisions, although any church, church body, or individual should be left free to express himself on the question. We do mean that the Christian is obligated to accept and follow the teachings of Christ with respect to the dignity and work of every individual, irrespective of his race or position in human society. Any movement, system, or law that denies this truth by statement, implication, or social practice is not in accord with the teachings of Jesus nor the principles of our Christian faith.

In accordance with these teachings, this Commission protests the violence in all its forms that is used against Negro people in the current segregation issue or at any other time. In recognition of the Negro's rights as a citizen, the law enforcement agencies of local, state and national governments should protect him, irrespective of his position or culture, from lawless attacks on his person or property.

We believe that our nation cannot long endure these lawless attacks made upon the person and property of free citizens in contempt of the law and the courts of justice. The perpetrators of these crimes, regardless of their position or influences in the community, should be brought to legal justice.

#### Freedom Imperiled

Furthermore, in keeping with our historic Baptist position of the freedom of conscience and expression in religion under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we call to the attention of the people in our churches and other citizens of our country the fact that any suppression of these freedoms, whether it be by the laws or state or by economic, civic, social, or church pressures, denies the voluntary principles in religion and imperils both religious and political freedom at its source.

We are witnessing today the betrayal of these freedoms by vocal minorities in some communities and churches who are able to arouse sufficient opposition to force the resignation of pastors and to incite retaliation against peaceful citizens who speak or act according to their convictions on racial justice and

interracial goodwill. The people of our nation should be reminded that both the voice of God and the verdict of history warn us that those who deny these freedoms to others do not long retain them for themselves.

Christian Life Commission

May, 1958

#### A Call for Racial Reconciliation

A hopeful development in the racial issue during recent months is the increased awareness in all parts of the United States of the national and international importance of achieving constructive solutions in race relations. The responsible American citizen has come to realize that this problem is not confined to a single region, but that it appears in all areas of the nation, though with different degrees of intensity.

In the current American scene, the American people can do better than to accept social usages that create fear and intimidation among our citizens or that deny the basic American freedoms to any of them. In any solution . . . the freedom of the individual and the full autonomy of the churches must be recognized and respected. But we must go further than this. We join our Presbyterian brethren in their statement that we must move to reclaim for all citizens of this country the full heritage of American freedoms, including the freedom of worship, the freedom to learn, the freedom to serve, the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear.

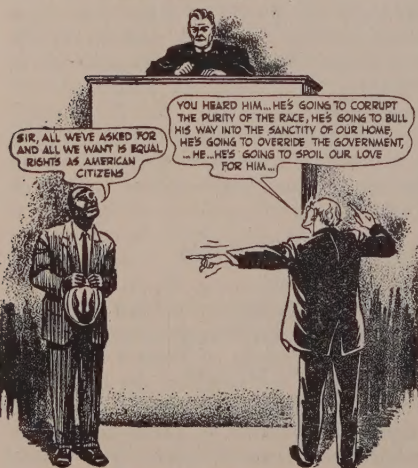
The international aspect of this question is of special significance for the Baptists of America at this time when they are uniting in a world program of evangelization and missionary advance. At such a time, the realities of racial conflict at the home base should give us grave concern and should call us to prayer for divine guidance in our efforts to resolve it. Our missionaries have plead with us through the years to overcome our racial antipathy which hinders them in their work. Now their pleadings have turned to warnings that a gospel that does not lead its advocates to reconcile racial differences in their own land will not be heard by the people of various races in other lands. . . .

In the light of these conditions both at home and abroad, Southern Baptists must meet the imperative need for racial reconciliation and seek the restoration of communication and fellowship with people of every race and nationality.

This period of human conflict is a time of challenge to every citizen. He is called upon to help and not hinder the progress of justice for all peoples. He is called upon to stand in defense of those cherished human freedoms that are the heritage of every American citizen. He must challenge the threat to the public school system of this nation, which is one of the greatest factors in American history for the maintenance of democracy and of our common culture. We commend those ministers and laymen and the great body of women and young people who have taken their stand on these issues to the end that we may become a united nation embodying a democracy that insures justice and freedom for all.

Published by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, Division of Christian Life and Work, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Editors: J. Oscar Lee, Alfred S. Kramer.

PLEASE, LET HIM SPEAK FOR HIMSELF



DO VIOLENCE TO NO MAN; NEITHER ACCUSE ANY FALSELY. LUKE 9:14

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE  
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.  
DEPARTMENT OF RACIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS  
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